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ABSTRACT

This book provides an overview of the thinking behind the charter schools movement, using information from over 3 years of immersion in the charter schools movement via the Educational Excellence Network. The first 2 years of the Network were devoted to research on charter schools in action. The research examined practical and policy issues surrounding the creation and operation of charter schools. During the study years, researchers: visited about 100 charter schools; interviewed hundreds of stakeholders; surveyed parents, students, and teachers; and examined policy dilemmas, political environments, and implementation programs in several states. The book features 12 chapters. Part 1, "Charter Schools in Action," includes (1) "What's a 'Charter School'?"; (2) "Field Trips"; (3) "Where Did They Come From?"; (4) "How Are They Working?" (5) "Trials by Fire"; and (6) "The Accountability Puzzle." Part 2, "Renewing Public Education," includes (7) "The Case Against Charter Schools: A Ten-Count Indictment"; (8) "Political Backgrounds"; (9) "Beyond the Schoolhouse Door: Changing Systems"; (10) "Beyond the Schoolhouse Door: Building Communities"; (11) "The Great Issues"; and (12) "Will Charter Schools Save Public Education?" An appendix presents survey results and methodology. (SM)

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